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Fiftieth session

First Committee

7th Meeting
Thursday, 19 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Antonio de Icaza (Mexico), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to convey to the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee my congratulations on their election and to wish them every success in their work.

(spoke in English)

Since the time of the founding of the United Nations, disarmament has been among the priorities in its activities. There is no doubt that this most authoritative international Organization has made a substantial contribution to establishing an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation throughout the world. However, I would like to note that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is not only a time to review and consolidate the achievements of the past but also a time to introduce new elements into its activities so as to adapt it to the new realities resulting from the changed political climate. The end of the cold war and of the confrontation between two opposing blocs not only provides extensive opportunities for the United Nations but also dictates the need for transformation and for an attempt to find new forms and methods for its activities.

At the present time, it has a unique opportunity to give up ideological discussions and concentrate its attention fully on solving urgent problems. The agenda clearly raises the question of creating a model of the disarmament process for the next millennium, allowing us to enter the new millennium and develop further cooperation in the world without wars and conflicts. The First Committee can and must play an important role in this process.

The fruitful outcome of the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, was undoubtedly the main event of the last inter-sessional period. This decision was of particular importance for my State, whose road to accession to this fundamental Treaty was far from being simple, preceded as it was by essential and intensive work. Although it had never sought to possess nuclear weapons, Ukraine nevertheless found itself in the unique situation of having inherited the world's third-largest nuclear potential.

Ukraine, even before the break-up of the former USSR, was the first to voluntarily declare its desire to become a non-nuclear-weapon State. Without addressing the background of this problem, I would like to note that our position was reasonable and constructive in spite of some elements of misunderstanding and even pressure in regard to the so-called "Ukrainian nuclear question". With its accession to the NPT and its ratification of START I, Ukraine has demonstrated its consistent desire to meet the commitments it had undertaken, as well as the peaceful nature of its policy and its desire to establish a non-nuclear world in the future.

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Important progress has also been achieved in the area of security assurances. In this context I would like to emphasize the unquestionable importance of the Memorandum on security assurances in connection with the accession of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakstan to the NPT, as well as resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council. These decisions serve as proof of a new and positive trend in the dialogue between nuclear and non-nuclear- weapon States and should be considered as one more step towards the elaboration of a universal international legal document on the subject.

At the same time, I would like to stress that, in the opinion of Ukraine, the current situation — in which there are States in the world that build their security on the fact that they possess nuclear weapons, "threshold" States and countries that have never had or have voluntarily relinquished such weapons — cannot be considered stable. The main objective in the near future is to make the NPT, a key treaty in the field of nuclear disarmament truly universal.

We would also welcome the fulfilment by the nuclear States of the obligations they have assumed in accordance with article VI of the NPT. The early ratification of the START II Treaty by its parties and the participation of the United Kingdom, France and China in negotiations on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons could contribute substantially to a further strengthening of peace and security.

The wish that the fiftieth year of the existence of nuclear weapons would become their last is Utopian, but the international community can and must do everything possible to prevent another 50 years of nuclear explosions. To this end, all States participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament should do their utmost to complete the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) in 1996. Ukraine strongly welcomes the important political decisions of France, the United States and the United Kingdom regarding the scope of the CTBT, making it truly comprehensive. We believe that all States, especially other nuclear-weapon States, will agree to the zero-option, banning all tests and that this decision will contribute to considerable progress in the negotiating process.

In connection with the work on the CTBT, I should like once again to appeal to all nuclear States to refrain from nuclear tests, thus demonstrating their real desire to move into a non-nuclear world.

A no less important step in nuclear disarmament should be the conclusion of a universally applicable and non-discriminatory cut-off convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee mandated to negotiate such a treaty and we believe that the Committee's failure to do any substantive work during the 1995 session will stimulate the Conference on Disarmament to begin its activities on this issue promptly at the beginning of next year.

These two important treaties on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament make it extremely urgent to improve the activity of that single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Unfortunately, the work of the Conference on a range of urgent issues has made little progress recently and the problem of expanding its membership has not been solved, although the new international situation requires the elaboration of universal treaties to be effectively implemented by all member States. This can be achieved if all States concerned participate in their elaboration.

We are glad that at last, at the Conference on Disarmament, an interim solution on the expansion of its membership has been achieved on the basis of the O'Sullivan list. I should like to express the hope that the earliest possible date of expansion mentioned in the text of this document will become a reality by the beginning of the next session of the Conference.

Ukraine considers the question of the need to take measures against illegal trafficking in nuclear material to be of major importance. This problem has long been given serious attention at the International Atomic Energy Agency. We believe that it should also be addressed by the First Committee. In this connection, Ukraine announced its intention to submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on strengthening international cooperation in the field of cross-border traffic-control and the prevention of illicit trade in nuclear materials.

Ukraine, being a non-chemical-weapon State, shares the interest of the world community in seeing that the Chemical Weapons Convention enter into force as soon as possible and it is in the constitutional process of preparing for its ratification. We applaud those States that have already deposited their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General.

We continue to devote great attention to strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by establishing an international regime for control of its implementation. We welcome the first steps made in this direction and believe that this work will be completed by the beginning of the Fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

While the importance attached to issues relating to weapons of mass destruction is fully justified, we must never lose sight of the problem of conventional weapons. Armed conflicts burning in various corners of the globe clearly demonstrate that conventional armaments jeopardize human lives.

Supporting an initiative of the United States at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, Ukraine has introduced a four-year moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines and urges all States that have not yet done so to follow it. We also welcomed with satisfaction the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene an international meeting on mine clearance in Geneva in 1995 and we submitted feasible proposals on the expected contribution of Ukraine in combating this type of weapon.

Ukraine took an active part in the work of the Vienna Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We welcome the adoption of Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons and strongly hope that the resumed 1996 session will finalize the work aimed at strengthening Protocol II of the Convention.

Ukraine is also committed to the fulfilment of its obligations under other international agreements and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We welcome the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We consider transparency in armaments to be an important measure and we submit data to the Register. We support the activities of the Secretary-General, in collaboration with a group of governmental experts, towards the further development of the Register.

The third year of reductions under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is coming to an end this November. In spite of considerable economic difficulties, Ukraine will spare no effort to be in a position by that time to reduce its weapons and equipment under the Treaty.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my delegation's belief that the coming year will be marked with substantial progress in solving a number of urgent problems of disarmament, namely, the signing of the CTBT, the entry into force of the CWC, the elaboration of a verification protocol to the BTWC and remarkable changes in other spheres of arms control and disarmament. I express the hope that decisions taken on the basis of the constructive work of our Committee will promote the most effective way of achieving these objectives and demonstrate the capability of the United Nations to be the guarantor of international security.

Mr. Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to associate myself with other delegations in extending to you, Mr. Erdenechuluun, and the other members of the Bureau our sincere congratulations on his election to guide this year's deliberations of the First Committee. I am confident that under his able leadership our work will be a success.

Fifty years have elapsed since the world marked the end of the most destructive war in the history of mankind, which resulted in an unprecedented loss of life and property. The atomic bomb, unleashed over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was a horrific experience which still haunts humankind and serves as a reminder of the vulnerability of international peace and security amid the ongoing modernization and perfection of deadly weapons by a few countries.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, and indeed closer to the commemorative week of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, this Committee must take stock of past mistakes and look forward to the future with a clear and constructive vision. The aim must be liberating man from the scourge of senseless weapons of mass destruction.

At this stage, we need to ask ourselves a number of pertinent questions and come up with answers commensurate with the relatively positive global environment of the post-cold-war era. Does modern civilization, with its vast avenues of diplomacy, really need nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction? Do Governments need to spend millions of dollars to produce such deadly weapons when most of the world suffers widespread poverty? Why must any nation spend so much scarce resources on beefing up its destructive capability when the remoteness of a nuclear war has now

become a fact? The answer to every one of these questions is a resounding "No".

As it is, civilization is extremely fortunate to have survived for half a century without a nuclear holocaust. This has not been a spontaneous survival. We are all too aware of occasions when the world was on the brink of a nuclear war. Modern civilization dictates that we must not gamble on the life of the world's people for another 50 years. Future generations will neither understand nor forgive us if we let the prevailing golden opportunity to pursue world peace and security slip from our hands through wanton conduct.

I am speaking about the end of the super-Power rivalry which has afforded the international system a reasonable respite in which to work towards global peace and stability. The start made on cutting deeply into the huge nuclear arsenals accumulated during the cold war should encourage the concerned parties to go the extra mile to make binding commitments aimed at the elimination of all nuclear arsenals within an agreed time-frame. While my delegation takes due cognizance of the implementation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START I) on the reduction of nuclear arsenals between the United States and the Russian Federation, we earnestly hope that these countries will proceed without delay to ratify START II to enable deeper reductions and enter into negotiations for START III.

In our view, the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in the spring of 1995 concentrated more on the extension process than on predicating it to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons through a well-programmed reduction of nuclear arsenals. Left unattended, the impression that has been given is that some countries are now qualified to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity. This impression must be redressed in such a way that the indefinite extension is not seen as watering down the urgency of obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

In order for the international community to attain the desired goal of ridding the world of these weapons of mass destruction, nuclear-weapon States must summon their political will in committing themselves to a deadline for the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

In this connection, my delegation regrets the failure of the 1995 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to achieve consensus on two crucial agenda items. The item on nuclear disarmament and that of the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade were unfortunately put to rest. It is a pity that progress could not have been achieved, considering that the session came immediately in the wake of the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

This is a clear example of negotiating in bad faith, where nuclear-weapon States are not too willing to part with their nuclear weapons, and in the process derail recourse to nuclear disarmament. Any attempts to build an exclusive club, reminiscent of the imbalances inherent in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, ought to be resisted.

My delegation welcomes the ongoing negotiations in Geneva for a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). These negotiations are a vitally important element in the process of nuclear disarmament. However, we regret that the most positive aspects of the Treaty, pertaining to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and security assurances, are not getting the priority attention they deserve. These are of paramount interest to non-nuclear-weapon States, and Tanzania calls upon all members of the Conference on Disarmament to address all the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States.

We are encouraged to learn that some nuclear-weapon States are no longer insisting on some sort of threshold for small tests and are resolved to working for a true zero-yield CTBT. But this, we feel, should be accompanied by universal abstinence from nuclear testing in anticipation of the signing of the Treaty next year. Mere support for the zero-yield option without adherence to the moratorium on testing will render the whole process meaningless.

As Africa, Latin America and Asia continue to make sacrifices in the field of non-proliferation, the only reward they can ask for is a speedy end to the arms race. Africa recently concluded the Treaty of Pelindaba, thus paving the way for the inception of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. This is a welcome complement to the Treaties of Rarotonga and Tlateloco in the South Pacific and Latin America respectively.

At this point, let me also refer to the pending negotiations on the banning of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. While the agreement to establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose is already in place, the actual negotiations are yet to commence. With the world holding large amounts of weapon-grade fissile material, we fear for its safety and security, considering the few incidents of smuggling and the possibility that it might fall into the

wrong hands. Negotiations to this effect ought to start sooner rather than later. My delegation therefore considers that the inclusion of stockpiles in the negotiations is vital, rather than merely dealing with future production.

Allow me also to commend the good work done by the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We urge that appropriate measures be taken to bring the Convention into force. The signatories to the Treaty, in particular those with the most chemical weapons, should lead the way by ratifying the Treaty forthwith.

Of particular interest to Tanzania is the cherished notion of the Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. It is the brainchild of the 1970 Lusaka Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the question of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean has been on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean for over two decades now. Although the Committee has worked relentlessly to convene a conference in Colombo, these efforts have foundered on the shores of non-cooperation on the part of some Member States, with some major Western Powers and majority maritime users of the Indian Ocean deciding not to participate in the work of the Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee has met and agreed to continue consultations, and Tanzania pledges its commitment to the important ideals of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, in the interest of peace, security and stability in the region. We appeal to the international community to give the work of this Committee all the support necessary and possible.

In conclusion, let me assure this Committee of my delegation's unwavering support of its efforts to guide this session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. López (Philippines): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to join the others in this Committee in congratulating Mr. Erdenechuluun on his assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. With his vast experience and singular wisdom, and the able assistance of the members of his Bureau, allow me also to express confidence that our work will reach a successful conclusion.

Now more than ever before, peace, trust, confidence and security remain the basic premises for growth and progress. In our part of the world, in spite of differences in race, language and culture, even conflicting claims over territory, we have forged levels of political cooperation on which our region's stability has been built. And within this stable atmosphere, our region has experienced unparalleled levels of growth. We have not let differences rule our relations in our region. Rather, we have chosen to build on our common commitment to peace and our shared desire for progress and development.

In other parts of the world, similar differences have led to less desirable results. We are pained by this and join the rest of the international community in the search for solutions to these problems.

In this regard, we welcome the decision of the United States to send troops to support the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are hopeful that this will prove to be the decisive element in the long search for peace in a country whose noble people have long endured untold suffering.

We must be ready at all times to receive peace when it comes. The tragedy of the end of the cold war was our inability to fully respond to the uneasy peace that followed. In this context, we welcome the work that the United Nations has done in the area of confidence-building. This work is a contribution of immense importance and value.

On a global level, we have achieved much in narrowing our differences. We have witnessed many dramatic and meaningful changes in our political and economic lives. But some contentious issues remain.

In the area of disarmament, while problems still remain, I believe that one of the greatest advances thus far has been the lifting of the veil of secrecy that obscured the positions and attitudes of States on this issue, a veil that was a prominent and pervasive function of the cold war. Though States will always continue to deal in euphemisms and diplomatese, much trust and sincerity have sprung forth from this new openness.

We must carry on this sense of transparency and trust. Much of the work of our Committee will be geared towards this end. The Philippines joins the other nations of the world in supporting these initiatives and in expressing hope for their success.

Today, we are witnessing novel and innovative ways of building trust and confidence in our international affairs. In our region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has embarked on a bold initiative to bring together foreign ministers and senior officials of countries with an interest in the region to talk about security. On an informal level, the countries involved and interested in the

South China Sea have come together on a regular basis to discuss the management of potential conflict.

On another level, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has provided academics and policy makers with valuable opportunities to interact and discuss political and security issues in our region. There are many more similar endeavours all over the world that are worthy of mention and praise. What is important is that these efforts reflect the true and sincere desire of the greater majority of States to seek means to maintain and preserve peace.

Today we face the tragic and stark reality that the end of bipolar confrontation was not enough for some States to forgo the possibility of using nuclear weapons. Instead of contributing to the atmosphere of trust and confidence necessary for meaningful and fruitful discussions on disarmament, several States have conducted nuclear tests, in blatant disregard of overwhelming world opinion.

One of the first things that our Organization faced after its founding 50 years ago was the detonation of an atomic device as a weapon of war. Six weeks after the founding of the United Nations, the world witnessed the awesome power of the atom unleashed.

Emerging from a war of unequalled destruction and faced with the imminent threat of nuclear weapons, the first thing our young Organization did was to face the issue squarely. Thus, the first resolution adopted by the United Nations was one that dealt with atomic energy and called for, among other things, the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. That resolution, on the Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, was adopted unanimously in 1946.

Today we have emerged from a war of a different sort — a war no less costly, a war in which politics has obscured the grave threat of weapons of mass destruction. We have emerged from a cold war, but, as in the war before it, we face the threat of nuclear weapons just the same.

Today we have an opportunity that those before us could only have dreamt of — the opportunity to establish a clear, unequivocal and lasting disarmament regime. However, we are faced with threats that may derail our hopes and aspirations.

The continued refusal of two nuclear-power States to halt nuclear testing directly threatens all our efforts and all our sacrifices to finally put a stop to nuclear proliferation. Those States that seek to downplay the seriousness of this situation should ask themselves if they want to start another journey of fear and distrust for the world community. Those States that seek to serve short-term and partisan interests by waffling on this issue should reflect on the long-term consequences of their actions. We must express our sentiments on this issue in the strongest possible terms, so that there can be no doubt about our resolve.

We will have before us shortly an unprecedented draft resolution against nuclear testing and calling for moratoriums on nuclear testing. Unlike what happened in 1946, our action will not, and should not, fall on deaf ears: the nations and the citizens of the world have spoken on this conflict and ideologies will no longer confuse us or obfuscate the issue.

These and other problems plague us in this new era, but we have also succeeded in taking some meaningful steps in addressing these matters. These should serve to inspire us to face the pressing problems before us with unequalled resolve and determination to achieve true, just and meaningful peace.

Mr. Park: On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that his vast experience and strong leadership will help guide the work of this Committee to a successful outcome. I would like to take this opportunity to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the deliberation of the important issues facing the Committee.

We witnessed a watershed in the field of disarmament with the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by consensus last May. The indefinite extension of the NPT will, no doubt, contribute to both non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons. However, we have yet to rise to the task of implementing the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, adopted at the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize the foremost importance of the early conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear testing in a comprehensive and verifiable manner. As a staunch supporter of a comprehensive

nuclear-test ban, we call for the prohibition of nuclear explosions of any kind and in all circumstances, and advocate the earliest possible conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. With regard to the primary seismological stations under the International Monitoring System, we are pleased to note that the Korea Seismological Research Station at Wonju has been chosen as one of 50 primary stations world wide. Through the Research Station, we are ready to contribute at any time to the efficient implementation of the verification network under the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

My delegation also calls for immediate negotiations on a treaty for a cut-off of the production of fissile material for weapons use. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee for that purpose at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament in March this year. We are of the view that the early conclusion of such a treaty would mark another breakthrough in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

It is deeply regrettable that some countries with nuclear weapons are still engaged in nuclear testing, despite all the progress made this year towards the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. At the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties agreed that, pending the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the nuclear-weapon States should exercise the utmost restraint. My delegation would like to urge those States with future plans for nuclear testing to desist from further testing.

The Republic of Korea has consistently called for the early resolution of the issue of membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that if the Conference on Disarmament is to remain a truly relevant and universal regime for disarmament as "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", it should be expanded and open to all countries with a serious interest in disarmament. We therefore believe that the Conference on Disarmament needs to open its door to those countries that have both the will and the capacity to contribute to multilateral disarmament. We are in favour of the adhesion of the 23 States accepted for membership as a package, as suggested in the O'Sullivan report. We also hope that the package adhesion of those countries will not be delayed any further because of extraneous political considerations. In this regard, we welcome the decision on expansion of membership adopted at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 21 September 1995, and hope that the countries in question will gain membership in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest possible date.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is widely recognized as a landmark in disarmament negotiations. Once the Convention enters into force, it promises to set a new trend towards establishing a more ideal and efficient disarmament regime by eventually eliminating weapons of mass destruction and establishing a reliable verification system. However, my delegation notes with concern the slow rate of ratification by the signatories.

In order to meet the demands of the international community to prohibit and eliminate chemical weapons, we should expedite our endeavours to ensure that the Chemical Weapons Convention enters into force at the earliest possible date. Therefore, I would like to urge the two States that are the major possessors of chemical weapons to complete their domestic procedures for implementation of the Convention and to ratify it without delay.

Serious concern and frustration have been voiced over the numerous issues still to be resolved at the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at The Hague. In order to address these issues and maintain the required political momentum, a spirit of compromise must prevail among all Member States. While it will not be necessary to take care of every last detail prior to the entry into force of the Convention, it is clear that the sooner the major outstanding issues are resolved, the smoother will be the transition of the Convention from the preparatory phase to full-fledged operation.

In order for the international community to make optimal use of the benefits that will result from full adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we should also strive to achieve universality of membership. The fact that some countries, particularly those countries which are suspected of developing or possessing chemical weapons, still remain outside the Chemical Weapons Convention regime is a matter of grave concern to all Member States that seek to fulfil the objectives of the Convention.

My delegation would therefore like to urge those countries that have not yet signed the Convention to do so at the earliest possible date. In particular, the fact that North Korea, a State which is known to possess a large cache of chemical weapons, still remains outside the international efforts to ban chemical weapons, is a cause of serious concern with regard to the effectiveness of the

Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as to the security of our own country. The adherence of North Korea to, its ratification of, and its full compliance with the Convention will significantly reduce the threat of chemical weapons in the region.

My delegation would like to note that the decision by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to establish an ad hoc group to consider appropriate measures to strengthen the Convention, including verification measures, constitutes a step forward in eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The last two sessions of the Ad Hoc Group held this year in Geneva, have proved to be very useful in providing an exchange of views among participating States.

My delegation hopes that the international community will redouble its efforts to adopt effective implementation and verification systems under the Biological Weapons Convention through the active participation of Member States and their cooperation and spirit of compromise.

As for transparency in armaments, we support the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament to enhance transparency and openness in the field of conventional weapons. While the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been a useful mechanism, we are of the view that universal participation in the Register will be the key to success. In this regard, we urge all other States to participate in the Register as early as possible.

Due attention should be paid to the anti-personnel land-mine issue. It is a well known fact that land-mines are particularly menacing in the context of post-conflict society. The danger and uncertainty caused by the presence of land-mines hamper the repatriation of refugees, obstruct the delivery of critically needed humanitarian relief and assistance, and slow down the reconstruction and rebuilding of the national economy. We believe that the urgency and gravity of the global land-mine problem was well addressed at the International Meeting on Mine Clearance held in Geneva in July 1995. We also believe that many constructive ideas for the strengthening of Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects were presented at the Review Conference of the States Parties to that Convention, which ended its session in Vienna just a week ago. My delegation wholeheartedly welcomes these endeavours by the international community to control deadly weapons, and commits itself to participate actively in these efforts.

For this reason my Government, through the Foreign Minister's statement to the General Assembly on 28 September 1995, officially declared a one-year moratorium, which may be extended, on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. We hope that other States will follow suit and consolidate the efforts to help alleviate the human casualties and economic costs of he use of land-mines.

With respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, my delegation would like to re-emphasize that preferential treatment in the transfer of nuclear-related technology and the stable supply of nuclear fuel should be granted to the State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which complies fully with the Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the NPT. On the other hand, due restrictions and disadvantages should be applied to a non-party to the NPT. These measures are indispensable to the strengthening of the effectiveness of the current nuclear non-proliferation system.

We believe that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can be promoted even further through the settlement of safety culture. In this context, the international legal regime relating to the safety of nuclear energy — for example, the Convention on Nuclear Safety and Convention for the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management — should be established as soon as possible.

As for the North Korean nuclear issue, which has posed a serious challenge to the NPT regime, the long-standing international efforts to resolve the issue have entered a new phase with the signing of the Agreed Framework between the United States of America and North Korea on 21 October 1994 in Geneva. We welcome the Agreed Framework as a positive step forward in the ultimate resolution of the issue. The freeze of nuclear facilities in North Korea, as stipulated in the Agreed Framework is being monitored without interruption by the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors under the mandate of the Security Council. Discussions are currently under way between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization and North Korea on the provision of light water reactors in the context of implementing the Agreed Framework. My Government firmly believes that the ultimate resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue will be possible only when the DPRK fully complies with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA and lives up to its non-proliferation commitments under the Joint Declaration of Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which came into force in February 1992, in

addition to the full implementation of the Agreed Framework.

We recognize that regional approaches to disarmament play useful complementary roles to global disarmament. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at Kathmandu, in particular, has been an indispensable mechanism for the promotion of security dialogue within the region, where a region-wide framework for cooperation on security issues has been conspicuously absent. As an active participant in the "Kathmandu process" and one of the Centre's major donors, my Government strongly hopes that the activities of the Kathmandu Regional Centre will not be adversely affected by the Secretary-General's recommendation to close all three regional centres at a time when confidence-building through regional security dialogue is needed more than ever in this region.

My delegation is pleased to note that the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation has been well highlighted recently. Despite a few disappointments, our year-long endeavours have reaped some notable rewards, including the indefinite extension of the NPT and progress in the negotiation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Next year, we expect the conclusion of that treaty and the commencement of negotiations on the cut-off treaty. In addition, we also expect the Chemical Weapons Convention to enter into force and the Biological Weapons Convention to be strengthened through a verification regime. These are the critical developments which have moved us even closer to building a safer and more secure world for ourselves and future generations.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): At the outset, may I congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation firmly believes that under his experienced leadership the work of this First Committee will reach a successful conclusion.

Since the inception of the United Nations, disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security have constituted a focal point of its activities. The end of the cold war has had a positive impact on the international security environment, presenting an opportunity for strengthened cooperation in the areas of peace, security, disarmament and development. We have embarked on a new era of international relations, wherein we can tackle disarmament issues in a more focused and realistic manner. Throughout the past year, we have witnessed the further consolidation of the disarmament agenda: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely by consensus; and the implementation of START I opened the way for ratification of START II. It was also a year that saw progress in negotiations of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, with all five nuclear-weapon areas declaring they would sign a test ban before 30 September 1996. But progress was mixed on other disarmament issues. The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention is yet to be achieved, and efforts are continuing to strengthen verification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which is already in force.

An equally important concern is the widening of the North-South gap in socio-economic development. These non-military sources of instability in economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields pose real threats to international peace and security. Our quest for peace and security must take these socio-economic realities into account, for they are the underlying causes of conflict. This lends a true sense of importance and urgency to the tasks of this First Committee.

For us in Bangladesh, general and complete disarmament is a constitutional commitment, and we believe that the ultimate goal of arms control and disarmament is to ensure security at all levels of disarmament. We remain committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament and non-use of force in international affairs.

General and complete disarmament is not a single task in itself but an entire process containing many individual challenges which the members of the international community must face together, as a whole, step by step. The first step, and therefore the one currently accorded the highest priority, is the completion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty has remained, since 1957, a major United Nations challenge. With the meeting of this challenge, the prospects for the realization of all other disarmament goals will be greatly enhanced.

Bangladesh joined in sponsoring General Assembly resolution 49/70, calling for the conclusion of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. In that resolution the General Assembly reaffirmed that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was one of the highest priority objectives for the

cessation of the nuclear arms race and for attainment of the objective of nuclear disarmament. The resolution was adopted without a vote, and signalled the immediate relevance of a test an. Furthermore, a large part of the work of the Conference on Disarmament at its recent session was devoted to the question of a nuclear-test ban. It is an encouraging sign to see that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban was re-established and has continued its intensive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, working closely with a rolling text to maintain past agreements and to work towards consensus.

Disarmament measures, in order to be effective, must be universal, not only with regard to involvement of the entire international community, but also in the scope of their coverage. Under a comprehensive test-ban treaty, there must be a complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States, in all environments, and for all time, without any exceptions. This, of course, includes the setting of a zero-yield test ban and a verification system which is universal and non-discriminatory.

The decision of certain States parties to the NPT to resume nuclear testing pending the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty comes at a most unfortunate time. This step, taken soon after the completion of the work of the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, conflicts with the document adopted by the Conference and its provisions on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. These disturbing developments will not promote the development of positive trends which have recently been observed in the field of nuclear disarmament, most significantly in regard to the successful completion of the negotiations on the comprehensive treaty. We must consider the resumption of nuclear tests to be a threat to the implementation of other measures in the sphere of disarmament, especially the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh reaffirms its strong belief that the immediate reinstatement of a moratorium on all nuclear tests would be most helpful in expediting the negotiating process on the comprehensive treaty, and strongly urges the nuclear-weapon States to exercise the utmost restraint during this crucial time.

In accordance with the fundamental principle of general and complete disarmament, we believe that disarmament knows no geographical bounds, and must be considered a priority on all levels — globally, regionally and bilaterally. Although progress at the international level has at times been limited, the regional and bilateral efforts in that direction, including those of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, have been encouraging in their ability to halt the destabilizing arms build-up in certain areas of the world.

Bangladesh joined in sponsoring General Assembly resolution 49/72, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. It is firmly committed to this concept and urges all States in the region that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon States. It is our view that nuclear-weapons-free zones and zones of peace can supplement global efforts towards the ultimate objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons, allowing neighbouring States to devote themselves to the socio-economic advancement of their peoples.

A broad common interest has developed with regard to avoiding further proliferation and realizing the ultimate goal of the elimination of all nuclear weapons. As a party to the NPT, Bangladesh wholeheartedly subscribes to its provisions and accords the highest priority to nuclear disarmament.

Bangladesh is delighted that a strengthened NPT has emerged from the 1995 Review Conference. The Treaty remains invaluable, containing the only commitment from the nuclear-weapon States to complete disarmament. The progress of nuclear disarmament greatly depends on the expeditious implementation of article VI of the NPT. Bangladesh also applauds the enhanced cycle of review of the implementation of the NPT, and the unanimous adoption of a declaration of principles and objectives, providing the international community with a political and legal framework in which to work. The successful extension of the NPT for an indefinite period marks an important milestone in our collective search for a world of shared peace and security, and must be viewed as an inspiration for the successful completion of the work that lies ahead. Now is the moment of opportunity that must be seized and not allowed to pass.

As an observer State non-member of the Conference on Disarmament, Bangladesh is prepared to contribute to the major negotiations in the field of disarmament and with this end in view is seeking membership in the Conference. The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament must be seen as a matter of urgency, with a view, not only to increase the number of States directly involved, but also to

increasing the interest in, and momentum for, revitalization of the Organization and its concerns. My country is encouraged by the Presidential decision in the Conference on Disarmament to allow Bangladesh and 22 other States to become members of the Conference at the earliest possible date and calls for the expeditious implementation of that decision.

Bangladesh also fully supports efforts to eliminate other categories of weapons of mass destruction.

The uniqueness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) in its complete and total disarmament nature is greatly appreciated as a positive step towards the principle of ultimate, general and complete disarmament. Yet the slow pace at which signatories are ratifying the Convention must be noted with concern. It is a matter of urgency that all States which have not done so sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, so as to bring it into force.

There were important developments in the biological weapons area, as well. Negotiations on a legally binding instrument that will provide the means of verifying the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) have moved one step closer with the establishment of a special committee to study proposals towards this end. Efforts should be made to develop a legally binding transparency regime before the convening of a review conference on the Convention late in 1996.

Bangladesh firmly believes that none of these measures should hinder international cooperation and trade in chemical and biological technology, including the elimination of chemical and biological technology export controls.

The carefully monitored transfer of technology for peaceful purposes can be of valuable service in underpinning non-proliferation regimes and socio-economic development by promoting the peaceful use of new technologies. Bangladesh endorses the idea of an international code of conduct to be established with supplier and recipient States to establish a secure environment in which to monitor the transfer and peaceful use of new technologies for socio-economic development.

Weapons of mass destruction naturally receive more attention than conventional arms, and yet excessive accumulations of such arms, not commensurate with a country's legitimate security concerns can also be a destabilizing factor as regards international peace and security. We must take a holistic approach to disarmament, thus including not only weapons of mass destruction but conventional weapons as well.

Bangladesh sincerely hopes for a continued decline in all world-wide military spending in excess of legitimate security concerns, with a significant portion of the resulting proceeds diverted to development purposes. This peace dividend will serve as an investment in the peace, security and well-being of future generations.

The non-military socio-economic threats to security cannot be overemphasized and should be considered on an equal footing with the military aspects of disarmament. Both developing countries and arms-exporting States should exercise the utmost constraint in their expenditure on, and exports of, weapons, respectively. States will then be able to adapt and convert military spending to civilian and socio-economic concerns so as properly to reflect post-cold-war realities and priorities and to provide for defence not in excess of legitimate security requirements.

We are of the view that a new, comprehensive and holistic approach to security, disarmament and development is needed at this time. All issues continue to be inextricably linked and inseparable. Every State and every region serves to play a role. An integrated approach, taking all of these factors into consideration, will allow the international community to work most effectively towards disarmament and security goals.

We must prepare for the new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has been agreed to in principle by the General Assembly and is planned for the late 1990s. That session will be a most propitious time at which to assess progress made in the follow-up to recent developments and a time for Member States to express their thoughts on the disarmament agenda at the end of the century and at the beginning of the next millennium.

Mr. Velliste (Estonia): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the Chairman on his election to preside over the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session and to express our recognition of the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. The Estonian delegation wishes them all success in performing their duties and discharging their responsibilities with regard to

some very demanding agenda items. I would like to offer them my delegation's full support and cooperation.

As is known, Estonia aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its associated member States. Thus, Estonia's position on crucial matters on the agenda has already been well expressed. However, I should like here to reiterate our position on a few basic items and to inform the Committee of Estonia's understanding of some points that are vital to it.

At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Estonia expressed its view that the dismantling of nuclear weapons should be a steadfast goal. We should all view support for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a global norm. Estonia is of the opinion that reduction of nuclear weapons and facilities will not only lessen the threats of the abuse of nuclear weapons but also lessen the chances of nuclear accidents and blackmail. In this regard, I should like to recall the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia in the course of the general debate at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. He informed the General Assembly of the closure of a former Soviet nuclear-submarine training facility in Estonia just about a month ago.

Turning to the concept of national security, it has been suggested that this notion infers establishment of sufficient military power to deter invasions. Without prejudice to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the definition of national security should be redefined as cooperation among nations. Hence Estonia is of the opinion that disarmament should also be regarded as a process that delineates a new definition for the terms "national security" and "global security".

I should like to make a few observations on the following points which, in my delegation's view, are undermining the efforts of regional and international organizations in seeking peace and security.

Notwithstanding the efforts and achievements of international organizations in security matters, we still hear tactless threats of the use of military power against other States or groups of States. Such declarations contradict the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the provision that all Members should refrain in their international relations from the threat of the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State. Whenever such statements are voiced, they cannot be considered anything but provocative, revealing disrespect for the efforts of the regional and international organizations that are pursuing stability and peace. With this in mind, the relevant international organizations and the international community as a whole should consider appropriate measures to discourage such reckless statements by Member States and respond to them decisively.

Estonia supports further strengthening of the agreements on conventional weapons. It is our firm conviction that, at a minimum, States should stick to the limits of conventional arms envisaged by agreements accepted by a number of States. Using national-security requirements as an excuse for the need to increase the number of conventional arms will inevitably obstruct the very purpose of negotiations through which countries commit themselves to strengthening not only vital security guarantees but also a wide spectrum of economic and social issues. If conventions should be revised, then revision should be only in the direction of further lowering of the limits for conventional arms, and not of an increase.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its belief that decisions taken during the deliberations at this historic session of the General Assembly will support the disarmament process and give reinforced security to all nations of the world, be they big or small.

Mr. Neagu (Romania): I should like to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun our sincere congratulations on his election to conduct the deliberations of this important body. I should like to assure him of the full support of my delegation in his endeavours to bring our debates to fruition. My congratulations go to the other officers of the Committee as well. It is also a pleasure to see Mr. Sohrab Kheradi as Secretary of the Committee.

At the outset, I should like to confirm my delegation's full alignment with the important statement delivered by the representative of Spain, Ambassador Martínez-Morcillo, at the beginning of the general debate in the First Committee on behalf of the members of the European Union and the associated countries, including Romania. This alignment reflects the firm determination of my country to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic political and security structures and to make a direct contribution to the promotion of the values of this community of nations and to the creation of favourable conditions for stability, peace and security in Europe and throughout the world.

In this spirit, Romania actively contributed to the agreements for the reduction of conventional arsenals, real

transparency in military activities and increased confidence between States in Europe. The Open Skies Treaty, to which Romania is a Party, constitutes a cornerstone in the effort to overcome suspicion and mistrust. Romania also takes an active part in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace programme designed to consolidate stability, peace, cooperation and security in the region.

The year 1995 is an important one in the field of disarmament and security in the world. First of all, it has witnessed the historic decision taken at the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to make the Treaty permanent. This decision, together with those on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the Strengthening of the Review Process for the Treaty, is a crucial event, not only for strengthening the non-proliferation regime, but also for the steady promotion of arms control and disarmament. The NPT is now expected to play an important, pivotal role in consolidating nuclear stability, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the disarmament process, as well as in deepening world-wide cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Under the NPT, which has been extended indefinitely, and profiting from positive trends in the overall international climate, the world community should pursue without further delay several important goals: completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than by mid-1996, launching substantive and productive negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and deepening the dialogue on increased security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

We are pleased to note that during the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament encouraging progress was achieved in important areas of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My country attaches great importance to the drafting of treaty articles on an international monitoring system. Such a system, supported by efficient on-site inspections, consultations and clarification procedures, should be able to accurately detect suspect events and possible non-compliance. Nevertheless, major issues remain to be resolved, such as the scope of the Treaty, basic obligations, the structure of the international monitoring system, the financing of implementation activities and the organizational set-up of the future comprehensive test-ban treaty — its seat, structure and functions. Romania shares the view that the comprehensive test-ban treaty must ban all nuclear tests, everywhere and for ever. We welcome the recent decision taken by France and the United States, along with the United Kingdom, to support the zero-yield test ban as a major breakthrough in moving towards agreement on the article on scope.

According to the programme of action embodied in the document on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, 1996 is expected to be the year the comprehensive test-ban treaty will be completed. In our view, this remains a perfectly attainable aim. The accomplishment of this objective requires consistent endeavours by all participating States to preserve and improve the international climate of mutual confidence. We welcome and appreciate the commitment of all five nuclear-weapon States to embrace a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996.

Romania is proud to be among those countries that have been resolutely supporting an early start of negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. My Government maintains the view that codifying the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons-grade materials in a legally binding instrument would reassure the world community that these materials were not being secretly produced or procured. Furthermore, it would advance the nuclear-disarmament agenda and curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament should take up the issue of cut-off with no further delay and should focus, in the initial stage, on the questions of the scope and effective verification of the treaty, with the aim of ensuring its non-discriminatory character and universal adherence to it.

As regards security assurances for non-nuclear weapon States, we hope that, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/73, conditions will be created for opening negotiations on a legally binding international instrument on the subject.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is indeed unprecedented as a global, comprehensive and verifiable multilateral treaty providing for the elimination of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. At this stage, we believe renewed efforts should still be made to ensure the entry into force of the Convention and universal adherence to it and to prepare for the future implementation of this important legal instrument.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that the Romanian Parliament unanimously ratified the Convention

last November, and that the instruments of ratification have been presented to the Depositary. At the same time, measures have been taken with regard to implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the establishment of the National Authority and the preparation of a draft law on the enforcement of relevant provisions of the Convention.

Effective implementation of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention has been precluded so far because of the lack of an effective verification mechanism guaranteeing international supervision of compliance. Along with other, like-minded countries, Romania is working towards the achievement of a draft protocol on verification, which, in our opinion, should provide for an effective set of measures, such as data exchange, export controls, national technical means, and routine and challenge inspections. We advocate the finalizing of this draft protocol as soon as possible, preferably by the time of the forthcoming Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held next fall.

We welcome the agreement achieved at the recently concluded Vienna Review Conference on the inhumane weapons Convention on an additional Protocol for the Convention which would ban the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. At the same time, we regret that disagreement on certain aspects prevented the amendment of Protocol II for the protection of civilians from long-lived anti-personnel land-mines. Having already ratified the Convention, Romania is looking forward to making its full contribution to overcoming the present difficulties and adopting the long-awaited amendment at the next review conference.

Let me reiterate my country's strong belief that it is now time for the re-launching of a more concrete and businesslike debate on transparency in armaments, an issue that is always related to disarmament and international security and that poses an acute and dramatic challenge in today's international environment. We are deeply concerned about the chaotic, ever growing delivery of conventional arms in our region and in other parts of the world. Moreover, the pursuance of preferential conventional arms transfer policies could undermine the balance of forces — established either with the passing of time or by international agreements — in various sensitive regions.

The issue of transparency in armaments is indeed a rather complex and sensitive one because it relates directly to the security of States in a troubled, uncertain period, in which various regions of the world are affected by suspicion, instability and mistrust. However, the common awareness of risks and challenges should not inhibit but rather stimulate our determination to cooperate. We firmly believe that there is no valid reason for evading the topic. To the contrary, the problem of transparency in armaments needs urgent and close consideration.

In view of its complexity, the approach should be gradual, starting with conceptual aspects and advancing, step by step, towards more action-oriented measures. Taking into account these basic requirements, Romania has submitted to the Conference on Disarmament its proposal for a code of conduct for the international transfers of conventional arms. We have also welcomed similar ideas put forward by Australia, Ireland and New Zealand.

Essentially, the idea of a code of conduct is intended to bring about restraint and responsibility in transfers of conventional arms. It also envisages the preservation of the equal and undiminished security of States at the lowest levels of armaments. Basic principles of conduct and criteria to be followed in considering arms transfers, or to avoid transfers, as well as an appropriate mechanism for data-sharing and consultations should equally be taken into account when such an international instrument is being discussed. Obviously, the code of conduct should be open to all States to ensure full realization of its commendable goals.

Let us take action in this field and stimulate all international forums that are working on such a code of conduct, or examine the possibility of elaborating one to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations about their activities in these directions.

Mr. Boang (Botswana): The delegation of Botswana congratulates the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee on their recent election. The election of Mr. Erdenechuluun of Mongolia by acclamation to the chairmanship bears testimony to our confidence in him, and it is a fitting tribute to his proven diplomatic skills. There is no doubt that under his able leadership we shall have satisfactory and fruitful deliberations during this the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The year 1995 is indeed historic, not only because it marks 50 years of the existence of the United Nations but also because of the landmark progress that has been made on the disarmament calendar. States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons unanimously agreed to extend the Treaty indefinitely despite some reluctance on the part of a number of the non-nuclear-

weapon States. They joined the bandwagon of indefinite extension because of two earlier decisions, which demonstrated the intention of one and all to honour their Treaty obligations. Here, I am, of course, referring to the mechanism "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" and the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament". And I wish to place emphasis on the latter.

In the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, States parties called on the nuclear-weapon States to exercise utmost restraint with regard to nuclear testing. Unfortunately, the hopes and aspirations of the non-nuclear-weapon States were dashed when two of the nuclear-weapon States acted against the atmosphere of international understanding and cooperation that had been brought about by the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

It goes without saying that this continued nuclear activity does not augur well for the trust that was bestowed upon these States by non-nuclear weapon States at the Review and Extension Conference. Neither does such activity contribute to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the speedy conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

At the Review and Extension Conference, States parties also committed themselves to the conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty not later than 1996. The Conference on Disarmament should be encouraged, through its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban, to conclude the comprehensive treaty expeditiously. It is also encouraging that the "true zero yield" option has begun to gain appeal among some nuclear-weapon States. As for Botswana, we are in favour of a test-ban treaty that would completely ban all nuclear testing, without exceptions.

Of equal importance to my delegation is the need to conclude at an early date a treaty banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material. The absence of such an instrument threatens to reverse our successes and achievements in the field of nuclear disarmament, since the continued production of nuclear weapons would be guaranteed despite the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

While we appreciate the significance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances, we maintain that the best insurance for us is a legally binding international instrument committing the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Having forgone the nuclear-deterrent option, we have a legitimate right to the only other deterrent — a clear and categorical assurance that we shall never be targets of nuclear weapons, by whatever means and in whatever guise. We go further: nuclear weapons should never be used against anyone, because everyone else would become an unintended victim. The reluctance of nuclear-weapon States to work towards the adoption of such an instrument therefore remains a source of serious concern to us.

The aspiration of African countries, as in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean and the South Pacific, is to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our part of the world. The conclusion of negotiations on the final text of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone and the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity of the Pelintaba Treaty bears testimony to our resolve in this regard. It is our hope that, as with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, nuclear-weapon States will extend the necessary support and cooperation for the establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The international illicit trafficking in arms is a source of serious concern. This malice not only aggravates the destabilization of States but also feeds the increasing spate of social ills in many countries. The increase in the rate of violent crimes and illicit-drug trafficking is directly related to the increase in this scourge.

It should be pointed out, however, that, without the international community's backing, the efforts of the afflicted but poor countries to avert the flourishing illicit trade in arms will be severely curtailed. General Assembly resolution 49/75 G is a welcome development in the fight against illicit trafficking in arms. The successful conclusion of negotiations in the Disarmament Commission on guidelines for international arms transfers, in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, will also go a long way as a contribution to reducing, if not completely halting, international illicit arms trafficking.

Let me, in conclusion, express my delegation's satisfaction so far with the First Committee's current approach to its work. It can only be hoped that such an arrangement will enable the Committee to work effectively and help the Organization to scale down its ever-escalating costs.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard all of the speakers on our list for today. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Kim Cheng Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to reply to the South Korean representative's absurd statement about our country.

As the world knows very well, our country had the bitter experience of the chemical-weapon attacks in the Korean war. That being the case, we are opposed in principle to chemical weapons. However, we are in a state of cease-fire, and we note that certain provisions of the Convention could be abused and used against us. It is illogical that the enemy, which is in a state of war with us, should urge us to sign the Convention.

The primary task on the Korean peninsula is to establish a new peace arrangement, and the signing of the Convention is our sovereign right. It is not a matter in which South Korea should interfere. Also, the South Korean representative said something about implementation of the safeguards agreement. We are now settling the nuclear issue with the United States. It can only be settled between us and the United States.

I think the representative of South Korea does not know that the key to the settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is the implementation of the agreed framework between the DPRK and the United States. South Korea has no qualification to speak of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, as it has committed crimes against the nation by asking for the nuclear umbrella of foreign forces and has allowed them to deploy nuclear weapons on Korean territory.

The nuclear issue is not a matter which colonial South Korea should poke its nose in.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): I do not want to disappoint the expectations of this Committee by failing to exercise my right of reply once again. Today, once again, several delegations have criticized the last series of nuclear tests carried out by France. I shall limit myself to referring those delegations to my earlier interventions, concerning first, and in particular the fact that our action is in conformity with the spirit and the letter of our international commitments; and secondly, concerning the decisive progress towards a global, comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, to which my country contributed by declaring that we have chosen the zero option and by our decision to renounce nuclear tests once the present campaign is concluded, that is, even before the signing of the treaty which we all wish so much to see here and for which we have been sparing no efforts.

Mr. López (Philippines): My delegation wishes to speak in exercise of its right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of France. The Philippine delegation wishes to stress that any further nuclear testing is inimical to the promotion of the kind of international climate we need in order to promote further nuclear arms control and disarmament. Thus, we strongly condemn and remain resolutely opposed to any further nuclear tests anywhere on our planet, under any pretext or for any other reason, including the so-called safety and reliability of nuclear weapons.

We sincerely hope that the nuclear-weapon States in question will reflect carefully on the concerns and sentiments that have been so clearly expressed by the members of the international community, and most especially, by our friends and neighbours in the South Pacific who would be most directly affected by any hazardous consequences of nuclear testing.

We, therefore, wish once more to call upon the nuclear-weapon States concerned to come to their senses and seriously recognize their responsibilities in a global context by putting an immediate end to this nuclear scourge.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I do not want to reiterate our position on the North Korean nuclear issue. But I would like to have someone make a brief comment on the chemical weapon issue. I am heartened to note that the North Korean delegation made a claim that they are against chemical weapons. However, I sincerely hope that North Korea can substantiate this point and prove transparency on the chemical weapons issue by acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as possible.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who wishes to speak again in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind him that his statement is limited to five minutes.

Mr. Kim Cheng Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, I state that signing the Convention is our sovereign right. South Korea has no right to tell us what to do. South Korea should also, as a sovereign State, abolish all the chemical and nuclear weapons that are stockpiled on South Korean military bases, weapons which were brought in from outside.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.